The Middlebury Campus

VOL. CXXI, No. 4 | MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT, OCTOBER 6, 2022 | MIDDLEBURYCAMPUS.COM

College commits to incrementally increase resident assistant (RA) pay to equal room cost by 2024–25 academic year

CORINNE LOWMANSTONE/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Residential advisors, the student staff that live in residential halls, will receive $9,600 in pay by 2024–25.

By CAROLINE HARDING
Layout Editor

After months of deliberation, the college agreed to incrementally increase pay for resident assistants (RAs) to reflect the room cost by the 2024–25 academic year. The college will also adjust pay for other ResLife student-staff positions, using the new RA pay as a baseline.

The changes followed advocacy for higher pay among ResLife staff last academic year. Dean of Students Derek Doucet told The Campus that he and Vice President for Student Affairs Smita Ruzicka were already working behind the scenes to increase ResLife pay before they were contacted by students.

Associate Dean for Student Life AJ Place told The Campus that ResLife compensation has been increased "almost yearly" since 2016.

"These latest adjustments will help us reach the compensation level of room cost for RAs, which is the standard many institutions use," Place said. "The other position compensation levels were set in relation to the RA levels."

Beginning in the 2024–25 academic year, RA compensation will reach the room cost of $9,600. Accordingly, the compensation is $12,750 for Head RAs, $4,800 for Feb RAs and $4,000 for Community Assistants (CAs), according to a May 2022 email Doucet sent to the students advocating for higher pay. ResLife staff received pay increases for the 2022–23 academic year and will receive further increases for the 2023–24 year to bring compensation closer to the room cost.

The ResLife student-staff that reached out to administrators to advocate for a pay increase felt that past pay scales for ResLife positions did not reflect the work they put in as student leaders.

"I was disappointed and started having conversations with peers to see what we could do," Kamryn You Mak '23 said.

You Mak and other ResLife employees sent a petition letter to senior leadership highlighting the main reasons why they believed ResLife staff should get a pay increase.

"Throughout the year, we are the first people students go to when they have questions about classes, struggles with registration, conflicts with roommates and friends, feel homesick or just want someone to talk to. We realize that most of this work is unquantifiable, but it is invaluable to our residents and the Middlebury community," the students wrote.

The letter also mentioned the time commitment and sacrifice of weekend nights ResLife staff surrender, as well as the increased responsibility ResLife staff have taken on throughout Covid-19.

ResLife staff researched pay scales at other NESCACs and universities to compare to Middlebury's. They found that most other NESCACs offer compensated room and board or a stipend of that amount. Outside of the NESCAC, residential staff are generally paid even more, according to the ResLife staff.

"The ResLife staff play an essential role on campus and truly care about their work. Compensating them accordingly is critical," Place told The Campus.

Ella Nasi '22.5 who has been on ResLife staff for three years, was happy with the decision.

"It's good that we are on the same page as other colleges and it makes sense that a job that involves taking care of students where you live means that you get the room for free. It could also hopefully encourage more students to be a part of ResLife because we always need more people and this could be a good incentive," Nasi said.

Jaden Roderique '22, who was on ResLife last year, felt the change was important and noted that enrollment this year and last has been higher than recent years.

"I think the raise in salary was necessary in making sure RAs are compensated for their work, especially with each incoming class being larger than the last," Roderique said.

You Mak reflected on the changes to the pay scale.

"I am glad to see that the college is committed to compensating ResLife accordingly, and I am proud of all of the ResLife staff that worked so hard to make this happen," You Mak said.

Course over-enrollment impacts professor workload, student experiences

By BRINLEA LA BARGE
Senior News Editor

This fall, initial enrollment for Environmental Economics (ECON 0265) reached a total of 39 students — three over the usual cutoff — with an additional 34 on the waitlist. Economic Statistics (ECON 0111), topped its usual 36-person limit by four, adding an extra 20 seats to the waitlist. Ethnic Conflict (PSCI 450), a senior seminar in the Political Science Department that is usually capped at 15 and had only 10 students last year, currently enrolls 20 students.

The Middlebury website boasts an average class size of 16 students and a 9:1 students to faculty ratio. But those statistics don't seem to reflect many students' experiences in the classroom — especially majors in certain departments.

Over the past two years, student over-enrollment has created a housing crunch on campus, and is one of the leading causes of an increase in the number of students enrolled in certain academic courses. This uptick in the undergraduate population size, staffing shortages in some departments and shifts in the popularity of certain majors have made it challenging for professors to provide the same resources and intimate class feel that the college advertises. As the school trends toward a larger-than-normal population size, professors are finding it hard to keep up.

Professor Amanda Gregg, who teaches Economic Statistics, said her class "is the largest [she's] ever had." In an email to The Campus, Gregg said each additional student adds hours to her workload and hinders her ability to provide individual attention to those who need it. Gregg has hired two graders to help lighten the work, but said most responsibility falls on the department's faculty and staff to adjust their schedules to accommodate students.

English and Environmental Studies Professor Dan Brayton is noticing the same trend in his courses. Contested Grounds (ENVS 0215) alternates between a larger enrollment cap of 50 and a smaller one of 25 to 30 based on need, according to Brayton. Even with the larger cap this semester, he still added three extra chairs to accommodate "students with particularly compelling reasons to

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LOCAL

TOWN RESIDENTS' COMPLAINTS ABOUT OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS PROMPT VOTE ON ZONING CHANGES

By RACHEL LU
Editor at Large

A few weeks ago, students currently living off campus received an email from Dean of Students Derek Doucet informing them of recent updates for off-campus residences. Doucet noted the problematic behavior from student houses at the end of last academic year, which led to a recent attempt by frustrated neighbors to change town zoning laws.

"Many of you were quite literally one select board vote away from having no off-campus housing," Doucet wrote in the email. "Fortunately, the select board opted to take a more measured approach for the time being, but it is essential that you act as respectful neighbors to those around you."

The email refers to the Middlebury Selectboard meeting on Aug. 23 regarding a zoning by-law that would redefine student housing in the town. The proposed definition would limit tenant capacity for those residencies, which would directly impact some students' ability to live off campus.

According to the minutes from the Selectboard meeting on Tuesday Aug. 23, the residents requested a change in the concentration of students in a property, which they believe would limit the tendency for misbehavior.

The minutes state that resident John Tenny said in the meeting, "the regulations on student occupancy needs to be applied by the property, not the apartment unit or bedrooms, or else you've nullified the attempt to limit the number."

Selectboard member Andy Hooper told The Campus that the zoning by-law was part of the planning commission's Amendments to the Town of Middlebury Zoning & Subdivision Regulations. The amendments required two public hearing meetings to pass, and no major changes to the amendments could be made between the hearings.

According to Hooper, there was no mention of the student housing in the first hearing. During the second hearing, however, residents brought forth the proposed amendment to the definition of student housing. The motion was passed 6–1 by the board, and Hooper was the only vote against.

However, the town attorney objected to the off-campus housing amendment passing in the second hearing because it was considered a major change between the first and second meeting, so the amendment was rendered null for procedural reasons. Hooper said it is unlikely that the amendment would be brought up again because of the significant ramifications it would have on student housing in town.

"None of this can be solved by zoning by-laws. There is want and need for students to be in the community," Hooper said. "Middlebury College is a huge identity of the town, and the idea that the neighbors and the residents can completely control those interactions and separate the college and the town is not reasonable."

According to Courtney Savage, assistant director for housing operations, there are 140 students living off campus this year. This is a substantially higher number than recent years, according to Savage and previous numbers reported by The Campus. The majority of these students were selected through the off-campus housing lottery process, and a few were approved through the Disability Resource Center.

In an email interview with The Campus, Doucet said the college regularly communicates with the town selectboard, and he attended the meeting where the zoning by-law was discussed.

"The vast majority of our students are respectful of town residents who live quite amicably with their neighbors. With that said, there are of course rare instances where this isn't the case and student behavior negatively impacts their neighbors," Doucet wrote. "When this happens and we are informed, we respond through our standard conduct policies."

On Sept. 9, Doucet sent a letter to the residents in neighborhoods near student housing to establish a communications process. The letter contained a link to the Dean of Students webpage, where there is a submission form for complaints about off-campus student residences.

An article from The Addison Independent reported on the details of the Aug. 23 selectboard meeting. The vocal neighbors of off-campus students live in the North Pleasant Street and Washington Street areas. The Addy Indy reported three properties specifically referenced in the complaints, all of which are occupied by college students, a large percentage of whom are student-athletes.

According to the Addison Independent article, John McPartland, a resident near Washington St. Ext. wrote an email to Doucet after an incident occurred before the start of this academic year.

"By Sunday evening, when all nine (tenants) arrived, a fraternity spirit prevailed," McPartland wrote in the email. "Lots of shouting, cheering and cursing over beer pong and cornhole games."

Hans Pessl '23 is a member of the nordic ski team and a current resident of one of the aforementioned houses on North Pleasant street, along with other members

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NADIA HARE/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The landlord of the Dyer Block apartments (pictured), where many students live, spoke in a Selectboard meeting regarding zoning changes, though the complaints were not related to his properties.

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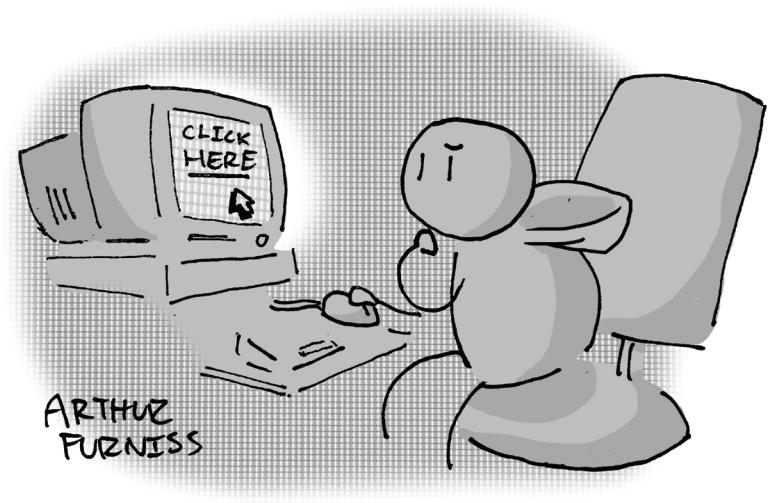
Scam alerts warn the college about phishing emails

By RAIN JI
Managing Editor



The college has seen an increase in gift card scam emails that mostly target employees, according to Chris Norris, Middlebury's director of information security, risk and compliance, in his scam alert on Sept. 21. The alert was in response to 28 messages sent the same day from an icloud.com address with no subject line, with five delivered and 23 filtered by standard email security controls or sent to the "quarantine" or "junk mail" folders, according to Norris.

The gift card scam emails are designed to trick people into purchasing gift cards and disclosing the number and PIN of the cards so that scammers may gain access to the amount available in the gift cards.

"This particular variant seems to be focused on our employees, using external email addresses (mostly gmail), first inquiring about a person's availability to perform a task and eventually leading to a request to purchase gift cards for others," Norris wrote in the scam alert sent out from the Middlebury Information Technology Services (ITS) email.

The Campus reached out to seven employees who are managers or supervisors across different departments to ask if they or their colleagues had received said emails. Jodie Keith, manager of support services, said she has not received any phishing emails.

"Fortunately, I do not believe I have received any of the email scams we have been warned about. I don't know of any of our staff in Facilities that has received those emails," she wrote in an email to The Campus.

Norris' Sept. 21 message is the third email that the college community has received regarding scam emails in a short period of time. The other two scam alerts were sent out on Aug. 18 and Sept. 17, warning users about fake internship and job offer emails and feigned legitimate shared documents.

There were 1,113 emails titled "MIDDLEBURY:JOB DESCRIPTION" sent from a gmail.com address with 24 delivered, according to Norris.

"ITS blocked the sender, then sent the community alert as a reminder to be alert for these scams. This is a good example of why we all need to remain vigilant, as any of us might have been recipients of the two dozen that snuck in," Norris said.

Students noted that they have received internship and employment scam emails. In scam emails sent to Ryan Yin '23 on July 15, July 22 and July 31, the email sender claimed to be Dr. Leonard Girandi, who is looking for a personal assistant to help students with disabilities. "This employment only takes an hour a day, three days a week, for $350 weekly. I cannot meet up for an interview because I am currently away, helping disabled students in Australia," the email-sender wrote. Yin disregarded the emails.

A Sept. 17 community alert about document share scams was in response to 30 phishing emails, of which 24 were delivered, via a Google Drive invitation for "Faculty Evaluation 2022," according to Norris. "This was a smaller email phishing attempt sent to members to try to collect usernames and passwords," Norris said.

ITS reminded students in their scam alert email to be vigilant against emails from external senders and to report any scam emails to phishing@middlebury.edu in order for the office to block the sender.

According to Vijay Menta, chief information officer of ITS, there is an increase in phishing attacks at the beginning of every semester because hackers prey on new students and employees. "We have had one or two incidents where users fell victim to phishing scams, but my team has been able to mitigate the risk immediately," Menta wrote in an email to The Campus.

Middlebury users are not especially vulnerable to scam emails, according to Norris. "On average, more than 97% of larger scams are prevented from ever reaching our inboxes, and ITS responds swiftly to block bad senders based on security alerts," Norris said.

Menta added that his department continues to invest in information security to protect users' identities and data. This week, his team introduced multi-factor authentication (MFA) for users who access the college systems on campus in addition to continuing to require MFA when off-campus.

"We are continuing to build security controls in layers and building depth in defense mechanisms to keep our community members and their data safe," Menta wrote.

Limited parking availability poses challenge to students on campus

By LILY JONES
News Editor

With 2,790 students enrolled at Middlebury this fall, some have found it harder to secure parking spots on campus. While some students claim that this was due to the Department of Public Safety issuing too many permits, Public Safety says that the issue comes down to illegal parking by some students and limited availability of high-demand lots.

There are 986 parking spots on campus and 951 student parking permits currently in use — fall term and full-year combined, according to Demitria Kirby, director of public safety for the college. Public Safety was not able to provide numbers on parking spots and permits broken down by class year.

"Public Safety has seen and heard that some students are not always finding spaces in some of the lots where they would prefer to park," Kirby said in an email to The Campus. "There is adequate student parking on campus. It just may not always be in the lot preferred by the permit holder."

Niamh Carty '23 has heard that the price of the parking permits ($115 for the full-year and $65 for the fall semester) is a deterrent for some students, who instead take their chances parking illegally.

"I know a bunch of people that didn't even get a pass and just risked getting tickets everyday, because you would have to get many tickets to add up to the cost of a permit," Carty said.

The cost of a ticket for a permitted student who parks in an unauthorized lot is $10 the first time they are fined, and the cost of a ticket for illegal parking for an unpermitted student is $50 the first time, according to Kirby.

"We have also found that some students are not always fully aware of all of their parking options. All students received an email on September 10 reminding them to register their vehicle and purchase a parking permit," Kirby said.

Public Safety has attempted to issue warnings and inform students of the parking rules by email before ticketing students who are parked in prohibited areas, according to Kirby.

Some upperclassmen, who are allowed to park in lots closer to their residence halls after parking further away as underclassmen, have been disappointed with the lack of parking near their residences.

"The other night, I looked in the three lots closest to me and they were all full, so I went down to the MAC. The only spot in the MAC was technically for visitor parking, but I had no other option at that point," Carty said.

"Past 6 p.m., the Atwater lot and all the lots nearby are usually full," Sam Segal '23 said. "I think the school should limit having cars to upperclassmen. There are also way too many faculty spots, like the ones by the FIC are always open, even during the week."

According to Kirby, Public Safety has adjusted the designations of spaces in areas that have been underutilized to better meet student parking needs. For example, some space for "P" Permit holders (second-year students) were added in the Q lot (Mahaney Arts Center).

"Why pay all of this money if I can't even park where I want to park, and, instead, I have to park in the MAC and walk 15 minutes, usually at night in the dark and cold?" Carty said.

Complete parking information is available at the parking information webpage, which states that the purchase of a permit does not guarantee the availability of a specific lot or type of lot.

COURSE OVER-ENROLLMENT IMPACTS PROFESSOR WORKLOAD, STUDENT EXPERIENCES

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need the class." As a general rule, the department prioritizes students pursuing a major or minor in the subject but cannot guarantee admission to core courses, which often impacts whether students stick with the major, according to Brayton.

"It's a wildly popular major and minor," Brayton said. "So much so that students regularly give up on the major because they can't get into the core courses."

This year, the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department hired another lab professor and increased some lab section sizes to make space for more students, but they are limited by "hard cap[s]" on class enrollment due to lab availability and safety. In an email to The Campus, Professor Rick Bunt said the department has longer waitlists this year and is "keep[ing] track of students who didn't get in this semester so that [they] can give them priority for the course the following semester."

Bunt said the negative "seats available" numbers that appear on the BannerWeb site represent those "saved seats" for students on the waitlist.

"We have to keep track manually and 'save' seats for student[s] on the waitlist.," Bunt said. "That process may also distort the numbers of extra students you might see on the online listings — we have to reduce the seats on Banner to account for the students we are 'saving' seats for from last term's waitlist."

Although classroom over-enrollment is a problem across many departments, Brayton noted that many courses in the humanities departments are not experiencing the same spike in numbers. Environmental Studies is, in Brayton's words, "almost universally over-subscribed." But some courses in the English department, like Adventures in Literary Romance (ENGL 0123) and Eighteenth Century American Literature (ENGL 0225) still have seats available, according to course information on Banner Web.

Brayton said over-enrollment of classes has disproportionately impacted certain departments.

"To some extent, that reflects national trends, students moving away from humanities majors. That's data — that's demonstrable at a national level," Brayton said. "But there are other factors at play. And that's what kind of concerns me — those local Middlebury factors. Why are we programmatically over-enrolling courses in certain areas and in others, frankly, under-enrolling?"

"If you just do a simple arithmetical ratio of faculty to major, that ratio is completely out of whack if you compare English to Environmental Studies" he said. "And the same is true for Computer Science, Econ — these are the majors that are booming."

According to Brayton, the college has failed to expand the faculty to accommodate the growing student population and alleviate stress for professors, instead investing in "massively expensive rebuild projects" like updates to the Johnson Memorial Building, the renovation of Warner Hall, the new students center project that is part of the college's five-to-seven year plan and the new first-year dorm for which the college has yet to break ground.

"Is that really where we should be investing our money, in bricks and mortar? Or should it be in morale, student experience, growing the faculty? Simple answer from me," Brayton said.

"The college has significantly over-enrolled without growing the number of FTEs [full-time equivalents], without growing the faculty in any meaningful way, if at all," Brayton said. "And this is where I'm most concerned, because great institutions of higher education invest in their faculty, which is to say, invest in the student experience."

TOM NEVINS/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Certain departments have more over-enrolled courses than others, some of which is due to the shifting popularity of certain majors.

Some departments have been particularly impacted by staffing shortages. Five Computer Science professors are currently on leave, and two left the college last spring, limiting course offerings for the fall. In an email last spring, Professor Matthew Dickerson, then-chair of the department, informed majors that the staffing shortage would impact the availability of upper-level computer science courses and that students would not be able to enroll in more than one 300-level or above class during registration, with few exceptions.

For many faculty, adequate staffing and fair compensation for college employees are the lynchpin of a successful teaching system. Last week, the AAUP (American Association of University Professors) editorialized on the topic, calling on the administration to provide appropriate compensation and resources to match professors' increased workload and adjust to student over-enrollment.

Thirteen professors replied to a Sept. 26 Tweet by The Campus' Editorial Board Director Lily Laesch '23, who was gathering information for that week's editorial and called on Middlebury professors for estimates of current class sizes.

Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies Professor Laurie Essig replied, "So it's not that I let in many more than usual because each extra student equals about ten extra hours of labor a semester and since I believe we should act our wage — and we are all earning less — I said no. But the number of emails asking to be let in almost doubled."

Kemi Fuentes-George, professor of Political Science and director of International and Global Studies, joined in. "Keep in mind, faculty and staff are dealing with these increases with no meaningful raise in pay over the past 2 years," he wrote.

Demand for popular classes only continues to grow. With an additional 300 students in the student body this fall compared to recent years, managing class sizes and compensating professors accordingly has become a key issue for many faculty and students.

"The fact of the matter is that there is a morale crisis at Middlebury College, certainly among faculty, and certainly amongst staff," Brayton said. "Even if it's not about every dollar and nickel, it's about being recognized for what I do. And I think that's where the morale crisis lies."

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Maple Run, Three Day Stampede return to Middlebury

By AMANDA MANOOGIAN
Contributing Writer

This past weekend, the Middlebury Maple Run was held for the first time since 2019. Among the most widely-participated athletic events in Addison County, according to its website, the Maple Run has become one of the most respected races in New England. While the event's main attraction is the 13.1-mile half marathon, the USA Track & Field-sponsored race also offered options of a 3-mile fun run and a relay.

The half marathon began and ended behind Porter Hospital. It took runners around Morgan Horse Farm and Sheep Farm Road, ending with a stretch through Middlebury College and South Street. The race course covered a variety of terrain, including pavement, dirt roads, and trails, giving racers a chance to run among Vermont vistas and explore the town of Middlebury.

While pandemic restrictions temporarily halted athletic events like the Maple Run, Covid-19 provided time for many people to try running for the first time, or revisit it again after a long hiatus.

For Olivia Mueller '24, the Maple Run was her first time officially racing a half marathon. "I got really into distance and trail running during the pandemic...[a half marathon] definitely feels like a long distance to commit to!" Mueller wrote in an email to The Campus.

Mueller said she signed up for the race with a friend to celebrate his and his twin sister's 21st birthday. In addition to Mueller and her friends, many students, faculty and professors from the college participated in the run, as well as residents from the town of Middlebury, Addison County and beyond.

Anne Lofgren '23 had been waiting for the Maple Run since her first year, after it was canceled three years in a row.

"It was such a full circle moment to finally run [the race] my senior year. The camaraderie and energy between the runners during the half marathon was so heartwarming and inspiring," Lofgren told The Campus in an email.

Student-athletes from the college also stepped up to volunteer at the run, including members of the men's and women's track and field teams and the men's ice hockey team. Gene DeLorenzo, owner and principal of GKDSportsVision, helped to organize volunteers from the teams.

"Participants came from all around the country to take part in this annual race in Middlebury, and the efforts of the students involved were greatly appreciated,"DeLorenzo wrote in an email to The Campus. "Students set up posts at water stations along the route, along with flagging at crosswalks and assisting in the registration and parking venues."

The volunteers arrived an hour before the start of the race to set up supplies and flags along the race, DeLorenzo added. Students also helped manage five aid stations along the course that offered water, Gatorade, bandages and Vaseline.

"It was a large undertaking on a normal basis — at 8 a.m. on a Sunday morning on a college campus it was even more impressive!" DeLorenzo wrote.

After the dozens of runners crossed the finish line, they joined the Middlebury Lion's Club for a celebratory post-run pancake breakfast.

"Spirits were high at the start and the finish — I think every race should have a pancake breakfast at the end," Mueller wrote.

After the race, participants received official Middlebury Maple Run t-shirts featuring the event's iconic "Mr. Sappy" mascot, a nip of maple syrup and some other fun prizes. Net proceeds from the race went toward three nonprofits — Girls on the Run, Middlebury First Responders and a Ukrainian aid organization (to be decided later based on the amount raised).

Following a two-year pandemic-induced hiatus, the Three Day Stampede Towards the Cure for Cystic Fibrosis Walkathon and 5k, a race through Bristol, also took place this past Sunday. Over the last 30 years, the event has raised over two million dollars — all proceeds are donated to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. According to their website, the race was founded in support of the organizers' granddaughter Kayla, who was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at birth.

Cystic fibrosis is one of the most common genetic diseases impacting children.

"The impact on Kayla's daily life was huge... We could not accept this as fact and decided to do everything we possibly could to change it," the Three Day Stampede founders wrote on the website.

In past years, the Three Day Stampede has been a three-day long event with a silent auction, lawn sale, bake sale, used book sale and walk-a-thon. In 2019, the event was one of the largest grassroots fundraisers for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. While the event has not yet fully returned to its weekend-long pre-pandemic format, the Walkathon and 5k race still had a great turnout.

Missed the Middlebury Maple Run or the Three Day Stampede this year? Both events will return for next year — stay tuned for their official dates. Check out middleburymaplerun.com and threedaystampede.org for more information.

Editor's Note: Olivia Mueller '24 is an Arts & Culture Editor.

TOM NEVINS/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Participants in the 2022 Middlebury Maple Run.

Vermont mycologist Meg Madden leads weekly mushroom walks

By TIFFANY LI
Contributing Writer

On a recent mid-September afternoon, I biked up to Wright Park to join Middlebury-based mycologist Meg Madden on one of her mushroom walks.

Cars trailed into the Wright Park parking lot, the drivers greeting each other and Madden for the walk.

Madden introduced herself and brought out a basket of mushrooms she had grown in her garden. As we passed the deep red-brown caps around the circle, Madden said she anticipated many fungi sightings on our two-hour walk.

"It's been a good week," Madden told the group. "[The] right amount of rain and the right temperature."

With that, we set off into the woods under an overcast but bright sky. Every few minutes, Madden stopped the group to point out a wide array of mushrooms — little yellow jelly babies, poisonous lilac fibrecaps, tiny blue cup mushrooms growing from a log and a milky white lion's mane resembling a stalactite.

Madden bent down to pick one or two of each species and pass it down the group. So-called "chicken fat" mushrooms left our hands sticky with slime, while indigo milk cap mushrooms stained our fingers a deep blue. At the same time, Madden explained to the group fungi cell structures, life cycles, and their roles in the ecosystem.

From early summer through autumn, Madden leads these mushroom walks approximately once a week all over Vermont. Each walk is sponsored by a different organization in the state; this particular walk was sponsored by the Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op.

"I first started doing walks because I also really love teaching," Madden told The Campus in a phone interview. "I love introducing people to mushrooms and fungi and just nature in general. That's a huge driver for me."

Madden began learning about fungi following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"School was closed, and my daughter was home, so we started going in the woods by our house every day, starting in the middle of March," Madden said. "I think I first became interested in mushrooms visually, because they're so beautiful."

Madden recalled taking pictures of the mushrooms she found and posting them on her Instagram account, @megmaddendesign, which eventually started getting more attention.

"My science brain needed to know what I was finding," she said.

Using the app iNaturalist, Madden is currently working on creating an atlas of all the species of fungi found in Vermont. iNaturalist lets users input geographical information and photos of their finds to identify fungi species. Madden's project on the app, called Fungi of Vermont, is currently collecting fungi observations from users across the state.

"The more people that are out there, looking for them and documenting, the better, because I can't be everywhere all the time," Madden said. "I think that community science is a powerful tool."

She said she hopes the project will be able to collect observations of rarer fungi that may be under-reported. Often, eye-catching or edible mushrooms have more recorded sightings, while other species may not be captured nearly as much, or even at all, thus giving an incomplete picture of Vermont's fungi diversity. Madden said two species of which she has the only sightings in Vermont on iNaturalist are the pink waxcap (Porpolomopsis calyptriformis) and purple edged lute (Callistosporium purpureomarginatum).

Madden said she also hopes the atlas will be helpful when Vermont begins to create an official state fungi list, which it does not yet have.

> "The more people that are out there, looking for [fungi] and documenting, the better, because I can't be everywhere all the time."

"The funding isn't there on the state level at this point yet to officially be creating a state list. But the atlas project I think is going to be important, too, for when that can happen on a more official level," Madden said. "If there was a list, we could start to get a better idea of diversity, but also rarity and things that are endangered. There's really no idea of that at this stage."

As part of her effort to create the atlas, Madden has gotten in touch with Middlebury's student mycology club, MiddMyco. They will join her for a BioBlitz on Saturday, Oct. 15 — an event documenting as many species as possible within a specific area at a certain time. This BioBlitz is sponsored by Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT) and the Ilsley Library.

"People will be photographing the mushrooms that they find, uploading them to iNaturalist, and they'll go into a project on iNaturalist that is a BioBlitz-specific project for Wright Park. Then that will give us a snapshot, basically, of the fungal diversity in that location in that time period," Madden said.

MiddMyco was founded in the spring of 2021 by Sloane Parker '22 and Gus Hearn '23. Chad Kim '23.5 is the club's current president.

"The next few meetings will focus more around events that [Madden is] sponsoring," Kim told The Campus. "Hopefully, we'll be talking more with her and collaborating too."

Aside from joining Madden on these events, Kim said that he is still in the process of fully solidifying projects and plans for MiddMyco.

"I think we're most likely going to try to grow some oyster mushrooms and hopefully involve everyone with the inoculation process to see how the mycelium colonizes. And then we can eat them," Kim said. "We'll also do some art projects, and some microscope work. It's just a very all-encompassing field. That's why we're trying out all these different ideas this year to see what sticks and what we want to do next year. It's not really a set structure."

MiddMyco's faculty advisor, History Professor Louisa Burnham, helped to connect Madden with the club. "She was one of the first people I met in Vermont 20 years ago, when I moved here, even before I met most of my colleagues," Burnham told The Campus. "And she ended up becoming a friend."

In the future, Madden said she hopes to see more official support for fungi research from the state of Vermont.

"As far as the fungi work goes, it's obvious that the need is there. And it's being acknowledged at the state level. It's just a matter of figuring out how to go about getting the funding for it," she said.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MEG MADDEN

Madden with a Hen of the Woods [grifola frondosa] mushroom

Town residents' complaints about off-campus students prompt vote on zoning changes

Continued from Page 1

of the nordic and alpine ski teams. The college asks each off-campus house to designate a point person for communication with the school; Pessl is the current point person for the house.

Pessl told The Campus that he immediately noticed the hostility from the neighbors when they first moved in over the summer. According to Pessl, a group of seven students were gathered around a campfire playing quiet music, when their neighbor began swearing at them and spraying them with a hose. In total, neighbors have called the Middlebury Police Department on the house three times this year.

"It's been nice working with the MPD," Pessl said. "They have responded to calls from our neighbors, and each time they have filed the calls as unfounded. They tend to be in utter disbelief. I think they are a little fed up with it too."

> "We understand that we inherited this problem. We didn't create it, but we are now bearing the brunt of it."

Middlebury Police Chief Tom Hanley told The Campus that his experiences with students have been positive. "It's a culture thing for the neighborhood," Hanley said. "They are used to a quiet neighborhood, and students will have to accommodate for that."

Police reports also showed a collaborative effort between students and the MPD on multiple occasions when the noise complaints were unfounded. "Upon arrival I could hear no noise coming from the home," read one report from September.

Pessl said he believes that this hostility from the neighbors is a result of bad behavior from the previous tenants of the house, who were also Middlebury students. Last year, neighbors reported incidents of trespassing and public urination after four consecutive parties thrown at the house by the previous tenants.

"We understand that we inherited this problem. We didn't create it, but we are now bearing the brunt of it," Pessl said.

Pessl and his housemates are working closely with their coaches and deans to build a friendlier relationship with their neighbors. To introduce themselves to the neighbors, Pessl said they were advised not to approach their neighbors' houses directly, so they opted to mail letters instead.

Across town on Cross Street, Sam Korman '22.5 lives with a group of his friends. Korman said his group was encouraged to live off campus last year due to the college's over enrollment.

"So many people wouldn't be living off campus if upperclassmen know they can get good housing on campus," Korman told The Campus. "At the end of the day, over enrollment is the problem."

Hooper noted that the landlord of one of the houses in question is a Middlebury parent who lives in Massachusetts, and some of the other houses are also owned by landlords who live far away. He said the absentee landlords for many of these rental properties adds to the problem.

"If you are like most of the landlords in town, then you are under much more pressure from the community to make sure people in your buildings are measuring up to what is expected. When you don't live in that community, you don't feel that pressure," Hooper said.

The selectboard and Doucet also recognized that there are many student residents who have positive relationships with the town and their neighbors. While Korman and his housemates have received some noise complaints from the town, Korman said he has a good relationship with most of his neighbors.

> "If you are like most of the landlords in town, then you are under much more pressure from the community to make sure people ... are measuring up to what is expected."

"There is a certain liveliness to living in the town and being a part of the community," Korman said. "I feel more ingrained in the community, and our neighbors have made an effort to get to know us."

Pessl expressed a similar appreciation for the town's close proximity with the college. He added that the college's cohesiveness with the town is one of the reasons he chose to attend Middlebury.

"I wish our neighbors would just have a conversation with us," Pessl said. "I think there are a lot of ways you can interact with us. Our neighbors are more than welcome to peer across the fence to check in and say, 'Hi.'"

Nadia Hare/The Middlebury Campus

Many off-campus students live in multi-unit apartment buildings in downtown Middlebury. Proposed changes to town zoning laws would apply student-occupancy regulations to properties housing four or more students rather than units.

Middlebury hosts first Fall Festival and Car Show

By KATHERINE MICHAELSON
Contributing Writer

The inaugural Middlebury Fall Festival and Car Show is coming to town on Sunday, Oct. 16. Situated in the Triangle Park area of downtown Middlebury, the festival will feature live music, 75 antique cars and the opportunity for attendees to buy food and products from small vendors.

The event will include activities such as raffles and a scavenger hunt throughout the 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. window.

The festival was the product of collaboration between the Addison County Chamber of Commerce and the Better Middlebury Partnership, in an effort to promote local business and build the town community.

"We want people from all over the county to come to Middlebury and experience this, not only the festival itself, but to come down and see the town and the new businesses," Phil Summers, executive director of the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, told The Campus.

Summers said he expects a significant turn-out of attendees; he estimated that the event will attract around 2,000 people from various parts of Vermont to Middlebury's downtown square.

By promoting engagement with both the vendors at the festival and shops in the town of Middlebury, the Fall Festival and Car Show will bring many new patrons to local businesses. Festivals such as this one offer a unique opportunity for economic stimulation in the town — visitors from out of town can stay in Middlebury's hotels, eat at the downtown restaurants and enjoy the town community.

According to Karen Duguay, executive director of the Better Middlebury Partnership, efforts like this are particularly important in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, which deeply impacted community members and businesses in the town.

"During the Covid-19 years, it was a little bit like a ghost town at times... The businesses felt it, the community members felt it, the residents felt it — it just wasn't good," Duguay told The Campus.

Duguay said she is focused on re-invigorating the vibrancy of the downtown area and the sense of community spirit after it was significantly impacted by the pandemic. Events like this festival are important in achieving this goal.

The completion of long-term construction projects and opening of new stores in town are examples of some of the work that the Addison County Chamber of Commerce and Better Middlebury Partnership have put into town development. Storefronts that were once empty are now attracting new businesses.

"Everybody is focused on bringing Middlebury back, and I think we're there and now we're just like, let's keep going," Duguay said. "It feels like we're in a really good place right now in Middlebury."

Not only will the festival encourage economic regeneration, but it also offers an important opportunity for town residents and the college community to interact.

Duguay said she hopes that students will develop a similar connection to the local community as that of town residents. "It comes back to connection... I just think we all need that now more than ever," Duguay said.

One student who attended the market, Noah Tyau '25, said it provided him with many opportunities to engage with the community. He danced to live music with locals and learned about the small businesses and the people that managed them.

Tyau added that the painting he bought from a local artist serves as a constant representation of the sense of community the event provided. "[The Midd Summer Market] was definitely the most I've interacted with the town people," Tyau told The Campus.

Duguay said she greatly values the student perspective in event planning. The Better Middlebury Partnership has been in communication with the Middlebury Student Government Association in an effort to gather student ideas on current and future events.

"The biggest thing is just come. We want students downtown, we want them at these events, we want their presence there," Duguay said.

Aside from attending the festival, there are several other opportunities for Middlebury students to get involved with this event. Students who wish to sell their products can register to be vendors at the festival up until Oct. 12. Students can also volunteer to help out on the day of the festival. Anyone interested in being involved with the festival or future events can contact Duguay at karen@bettermiddleburypartnership.

Photo courtesy of Jason Duquette-Hoffman

The Car Show will feature 75 antique cars for attendees to view.

EXPIRED FILM, EXPIRED CARS AND FRESH RESOLUTIONS: DOCUMENTING THE SNAKE MOUNTAIN CAR SHOW

By DEVIN SANTIKARMA
Multimedia Editor

As my shoes squeaked underneath dew-dropped grass, I readied my camera — filled with expired film — to document Addison County's biggest car show of the year. Surrounding the perimeter of popped hoods hiding chrome-tinted engines were flashy semi-trailer trucks and towering off-roading vehicles. Though the cars are mostly old, this experience for me was pure novelty as I watched families with giddy kids ogling at each vintage Camaro or Chevrolet Impala they saw, the owners proudly explaining technical specs and neat facts about vehicles they've kept in pristine condition for generations.

One car owner, for example, has undergone a full transformation of his car into a reflection of his passions. His star-covered hat matched the flame-shaped rear view mirror he'd installed on his car. For others, their cars are not modified in any way at all, keeping their mint condition features. This is the case for an owner who first bought his car in 1969 for driving back and forth between Vermont and Kentucky for college. He told me he has kept it just as it was the first day of his freshman year. One owner even had a miniature toy version of their Camaro mounted on the engine, matching every detail inside and out.

As I meandered through crowds sporting camouflage and smoking antique pipes, I found myself in a perfect place to watch the Revving Competition. Cheers of support rang out for each of the competing engines, which made bellowing sounds I couldn't even imagine could come from a vehicle.

As I wound down with some homemade chili and fried dough, I was excited to develop the rolls of expired film taken on a camera that was almost as aged as some of the cars I had shot. But to my surprise, I realized upon receiving and scanning my negatives that the photos I had been so excited to shoot had undergone a darker, more moody makeover. I realized that due to some mechanical error, the film hadn't been exposed correctly. Defeated, I realized that the visual component to the stories I had gathered could no longer tell the story I wanted to tell.

It was at this moment, though, that I realized that I had just experienced exactly what these owners had been talking to me about all day. While I was stressing over a silly little camera that had been begging to die for the last forty years, I wondered how many days these car owners had invested in their passion projects. From scouring the internet — a mode some admitted they still weren't used to — for parts manufactured decades ago to roadside breakdowns, the obstacles they had surmounted in keeping up these cars reflected how much they meant to them. These automobiles serve as testaments to forgotten stories, generations of hounding away in a garage, and legacies of entire families preserved in a condition of honor and homage. Their past has not passed.

Though winter is approaching, most owners' least favorite season, I hope to be lucky enough to witness glimpses of sunshine on fall weekends. It's here where long-living couples, families old and new, and lone riders can sit back and indulge in the fruits of their labor, whipping their timeless rides through the Vermont countryside in a manner no other rider on the road could. If I'm lucky, maybe I'll catch them on film.

ALL PHOTOS BY DEVIN SANTIKARMA

SO HERE'S THE DEAL:

ON FEMALE BIRTH CONTROL

Column

So Here's the Deal offers reflections on campus life and culture.

***Sarah Miller** is an Opinions Editor for The Campus and a member of the class of 2024.*

My gynecologist recommended I take one Aleve before my intrauterine device (IUD) insertion. According to friends and the internet, this advice is common practice.

And as nearly anyone with a uterus knows, one Aleve is insufficient to combat "normal" menstrual cramps much less the "normal" cramps which typically accompany an IUD insertion.

In the days before my insertion, I compulsively read first-hand accounts to naturalize an expectation of extreme pain. Like women are said to do after labor, the memory of my insertion cramps are blank except for the impression that they were the most painful minutes of my life. I was equal parts proud and surprised I didn't cry.

The IUD is having a moment.

For women of my mother's generation the device is synonymous with class action lawsuits, infertility, uterine perforation and death. However, in the twenty-first century, the IUD is "The Mercedes-Benz of Birth Control" and the "Queen of the Contraceptive World." My gynecologist presented the IUD as "stick and forget it" — the smartest and sexiest option for college students. The IUD makes gains every year and is the most popular option among women's healthcare providers.

My cramps continued for weeks, but that was expected. While many womens' cramps resolve within days, it is considered normal to experience cramping for anywhere between three to six months after the insertion.

Over those weeks, I became familiar with the rhythms of my pain. Pain woke me up before my alarm, pain was what I tried to endure on my morning carpool before popping two Aleve, and when the Aleve finally flooded my system (usually near the end of first period), the release of pain allowed me to stand again until the end of the school day when the Aleve wore off and the cycle began anew.

It was awful, though not without a romantic character. Pain and the triumph over it seemed inextricable from the IUD's glory. Not only is the IUD considered the most effective form of birth control, it is also a "metal-as-fuck measure" which makes a " thriving coven of women... bonded forever." The lionization of the procedure's pain should not be surprising as we are taught early and often pain is essential to womanhood.

At a follow-up appointment, the gynecologist asked if I loved my IUD. I told her, my voice gone warbly with tears, I was trying to love my IUD, but it just wouldn't love me back. I started to cry. That I sounded like I was complaining about a bad boyfriend made my humiliation worse. Seven weeks had passed since my insertion.

She wrote me a prescription for Norethindrone, the brand name for the contraceptive pill, to help with the cramps. Eventually, she promised, I would love the IUD.

The pain improved, but did not go away, and I never managed to love my IUD. The numerous doctors I saw told me the device was in place and recommended Aleve for any cramping. Unfortunately, they said, there was no way to tell if my body was reacting negatively to the device. By the second semester of my sophomore year of college, my daily Aleve pills were as natural to my morning routine as my cup of coffee. The Aleve was a preventative measure. My cramps were not always momentous, but it was impossible to predict if the manageable spidery pain in the small of my back would go away by lunch or leave me incapacitated for hours.

When I returned home for the summer after sophomore year, I developed chronic abdominal pain and breast tenderness. I could neither conclusively link nor separate the symptoms from my IUD.

The lack of conclusive evidence did not matter. At all hours I fantasized about tugging on my strings. The IUD would slide out of my body as easily as a fork from a loaf finished baking. I would finally be finished with the alien in my body. Near the end of June, two and a half years after my initial procedure, I made an appointment to get my IUD removed.

"Are you sure you want to get it taken out?" I recall the gynecologist asking, "After removal, many women realize their health issues aren't related to their IUD, and then they're out a reliable form of birth control as well."

"So, do you think I shouldn't get it taken out?" I asked.

"I can't tell you what to do," she said.

"Ok," I said. "I think I'm still going to get it out."

She kept her face blank and wrote me a prescription for the contraceptive pill I could pick up the same day.

Three days later, Roe v. Wade was overturned, and I did not regret removing my IUD despite the evidence that suggested I should.

My birth control prescription gathered dust in CVS, and I ignored my text alerts to pick it up. I knew I would return to birth control eventually, but I wanted time for my body to reset and time to more thoughtfully consider my next contraceptive.

During the same summer, many of my friends were breaking up with their birth control. After requiring surgical intervention due to her IUD, one told me she was considering quitting entirely. "No pill, no IUD, no condoms. Just pull-out." She was mostly joking, but I think I would have been less horrified if she confessed to shooting someone in broad daylight.

The severity of my judgment can be explained by the facts of my education. I matriculated from a small, liberal high school where picking your first birth control was as much a cornerstone of the teenage experience as learning to drive. For any woman privileged enough to access birth control, it seemed worse than irresponsible, it seemed downright immoral, to forgo the luxury. If yesterday's "angel in the house" needed to cook pot roast, today's woman is tasked with scrambling her hormones from adolescence to menopause — unless you have the copper IUD (associated with heavier, longer and more painful periods), in which case I salute your fortitude.

But I began to question why the expectation of birth control is so one-sided.

As it currently stands, access to birth control is framed as a women's issue. In the wake of increasing abortion restrcitions, the idea that men should not legislate uteurses has emerged as a rallying cry among protesters, bloggers and Instagram stories. While I can understand the slogan's rhetorical impetus, this sentiment ultimately does more damage to the pursuit of better birth control. Setting aside the political reality that men have always and will always legislate women's bodies, this slogan reinforces the principle that birth control is a woman's problem and therefore, with the exception of those concerned with curtailing access, unimportant to the half of the population with greater access to the power to make birth control better.

The closest thing on the market to completely reversible male birth control is the "male condom" — more commonly referred to as "the condom." This may seem like a small linguistic quibble, but the common-use removal of the modifying adjective reflects how we shift the responsibility of birth control almost completely onto the uterus' shoulders.

If condoms were once the expectation, they are no longer. The high prevalence, among certain demographics, of effective female birth control seems to have given men greater license to express their frustrations with condoms. Condoms are said to be uncomfortable and a barrier to sexual and emotional intimacy. Not only has birth control become a woman's prerogative, it has also become unmasculine.

However, I am not a moralist, physician or educator, and my gripe is with the undue balance and not with condomless sex.

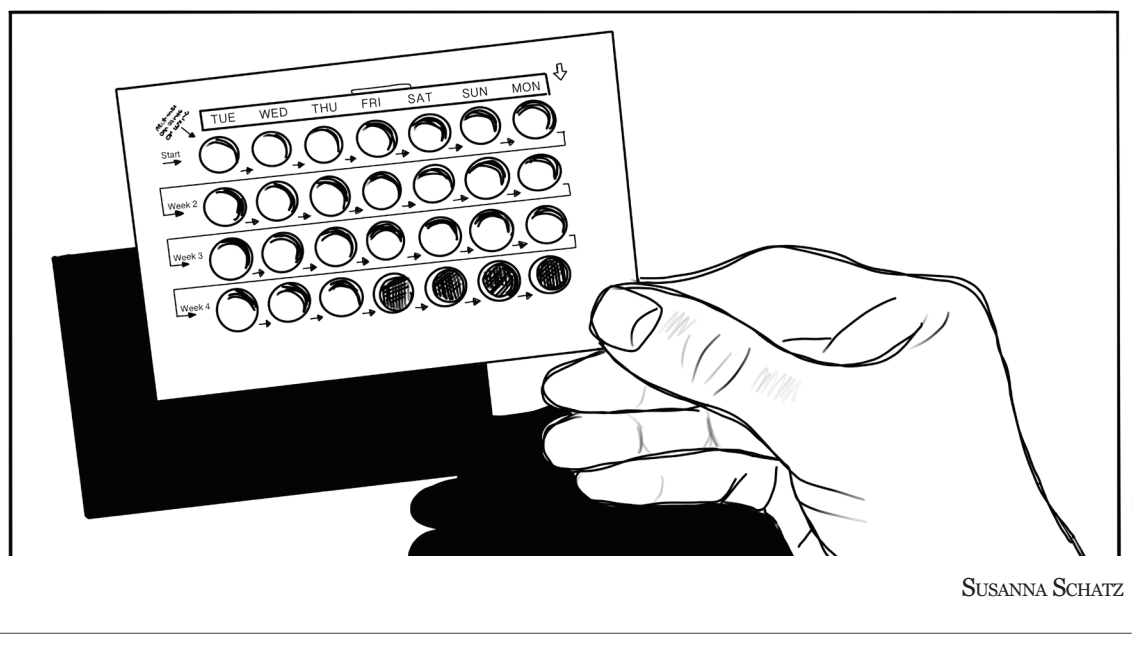
The 20th century presents people with uteri with an unprecedented buffet of birth control. Yet, like with buffets there are no perfect, or sometimes even appealing, options. Choosing birth control means choosing between tolerable costs and continually evaluating whether those costs remain tolerable.

At the end of this July, I started the pill. I tried to mitigate the risks by asking my doctor for a low hormone pill, but I knew I was rolling the dice just the same. She described the pill as typically well tolerated.

Contraceptive pills are associated with an increased risk of breast cancer.

Some of the listed potential side effects of my current birth control are potential nausea, headaches, bloating, breast tenderness, decrease in sex drive, swelling of the ankles/feet due to fluid retention, an inability to know with certainty if my emotions are chemically produced, blood clots in the legs, mood changes, difficulty wearing contact lenses, etc.

At 5 p.m., I open wide. It tastes like sugar.



Susanna Schatz

Party with care:

Respecting the spaces where we live and work

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

We're guessing that most of us don't want broken glass, beer cans, vomit or urine in the spaces we inhabit. Yet a return to the pre-Covid party scene has also, unfortunately, ushered in a return of damage, destruction and vandalism of both public and private spaces. We're not totally sure why drunk students like to smash, steal and break things on nights out, but we do know that it represents a level of entitlement and disregard that other community members should in no way have to deal with.

This is not a reminder we feel like we should have to issue every semester, but here we are: The places you go to party are people's living spaces. Maybe this comes as a shock to some, but people do actually live there! They do not want their belongings or decorations stolen, they do not want people peeing in their stairwells, and they do not want holes punched in their walls.

On one end, underclassmen may perceive places like Atwater as feral, weekend party spaces where they can do whatever they want and then not return for a week — and suddenly everything has been magically cleaned. On the other hand, upperclassmen, possibly wielding some pent-up energy from "n+1" semesters, are employing a "f**k it" attitude, knowing that they'll graduate soon and potentially eschew impending consequences.

Either way, the messes that we — as adults — make, are cleaned up by custodial staff who are already overworked and underpaid. For instance, the Ross complex has usually been cared for by a team of five, yet for the 2021–22 academic year there were only two custodial staff members cleaning four residence halls. A Residential Advisor (RA) in Ross noted that he frequently witnesses a blatant disrespect of mutual spaces, including smashed light fixtures, personal belongings filling up the hallway and communal furniture being moved into students' private rooms.

Recently, someone sprayed a fire extinguisher for fun in a residential hallway in the Chateau, with one resident noting that, in addition to the irritating fumes, the residue had to later be cleaned up by a member of college custodial staff. Frankly, we don't feel these tasks should be a normal part of anyone's job, and certainly not for someone who is likely not being paid enough in the first place.

Yes, Middlebury can be rigorous and taxing. But no amount of homework or stress legitimizes this type of "unwinding" come Friday and Saturday night. And though we're well aware that this level of destruction and entitlement is not new, we also want to emphasize that it can stop at any time if we as a student body decide that we want to respect the campus we live on.

This however, does not mean we are calling for the individually responsible parties to be punished. Rather, we as a campus need overarching change in the way we think about accountability and decency. Three years ago, after a particularly bad pattern of Atwater vandalism that prompted a staff member to ask us to look into it, we wrote that "changing this kind of deeply-ingrained, habitual behavior cannot be achieved on a case-by-case basis [...] it requires a holistic shift in Middlebury culture."

This sentiment is as true now as it was then, and we all need to take responsibility for ourselves and our actions (and potentially that of our friends if they're truly that inebriated). After semesters of being prohibited from partying, we should be grateful for the circumstances we have now — and show it by being proactive about caring for the spaces we inhabit.

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Corrections

10/6/2022: The attribution for a photo accompanying the news article "College implements new mask-optional policy, removes Covid-19 case dashboard" was incorrectly attributed to Tom Nevins. The photo was actually taken by Nadia Hare. This error has been corrected on our website.

10/6/2022: A previous version of the op-ed "Employees deserve a cost-of-living adjustment" included an incomplete sentence. This error has been corrected on our website.

@middcampus

BAN CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTERS FROM OUR CAMPUS

Op-ed

By the Middlebury Branch of the NESCAC Coalition to Ban CPCs

Two weeks ago, a crisis pregnancy center was allowed a table at Middlebury College's Student Involvement Fair. On behalf of the NESCAC Coalition to Ban Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs), we invite you to sign our petition to ban CPCs from our campus in the future. And we, as concerned members of the Middlebury community, want our peers to be equipped with information about the harm that CPCs cause to the public health of vulnerable populations not only within Middlebury but also beyond.

The reversal of Roe v. Wade this past summer only exacerbates the problems CPCs create. That is why we founded the NESCAC Coalition to Ban CPCs, because now, more than ever, CPCs constitute an active threat to public health and safety — both on our campuses and throughout the country.

Never heard of a crisis pregnancy center? CPCs are anti-abortion nonprofit organizations that critics describe as "fake clinics." Scholars and activists have documented the many deceptive strategies CPCs use to reach their goal of preventing abortions. About 80% of CPC websites contain false or misleading medical information. They suggest that safe abortions lead to a higher risk of breast cancer, depression, suicide and infertility. Many professional medical organizations — including the National Cancer Institute and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists — make clear that these claims are untrue. Following the closure of Middlebury's Planned Parenthood in June 2022, it is especially concerning that students are at risk of receiving information that exaggerates the risks of abortion and downplays the risks of pregnancy and birth. Studies have found that the risk of death from childbirth is on average 14 times higher than abortion.

Alarmingly, CPCs are subject to almost no governmental oversight. They often gather the private medical information of their clients even though they do not have to be HIPAA compliant. In fact, CPCs are believed to share this private health information with national anti-abortion networks. This is a huge data privacy concern, especially following the overturning of Roe v. Wade. Most notably, CPCs also disproportionately target poor women and women of color with their tactics.

This past summer, Middlebury College promised to "reimburse costs for travel for an individual and a support person to receive reproductive health care in another state," if they are unable to access safe abortions in their home state. The administration's quick action in support of abortion access was commendable. However, the administration continues to uphold the standard of inviting an organization to campus that is actively circulating medical misinformation in the name of preventing abortion. This is explicitly counter to Middlebury Codes of Conduct. The Codes of Conduct policy "Honesty and Cooperation in Middlebury Matters," notably states that, "this obligation includes [...] providing accurate information to Middlebury personnel, offices and committees."

It's often difficult to determine the core ethos of CPCs by looking at their websites and social media platforms, likely because they notoriously employ confusing tactics in an effort to trick and manipulate possible clients. They set up near abortion facilities and in buildings that were formerly abortion clinics. They use names that obscure their anti-abortion agendas (such as "Options for Women"). And, alarmingly, they often pose as medical facilities, with volunteers wearing white lab coats and offering sonograms. All of this works to obscure their true purpose: preventing abortions. Today, there are more than 2,600 CPCs in the U.S., but fewer than 750 abortion clinics. Even here in Vermont, there are more CPCs than abortion clinics.

The CPC in Middlebury is called The Women's Center, formerly known as "The Pregnancy Resource Center," and uses many of these strategies. It is located in a former Planned Parenthood office. The Women's Center advertises itself as a "confidential" and "medical" resource, though it is not required to be HIPAA compliant and protect clients' private medical information. Its nonprofit status allows it to navigate without the regulation and community accountability checks that registered nonprofit medical facilities are required to follow for their not-for-profit status in the state of Vermont. Further, it frames abortion as a traumatic event that causes Post Abortion Stress Syndrome in pamphlets attributed to their offices (a condition which is not medically recognized; in fact, 95% of abortion patients say it was the right decision). The Women's Center also advertises the use of the Abortion Reversal Pill as a viable option for pregnant people, when it is clearly not supported by science. This kind of information can have serious consequences — and this is why year after year students and faculty have pushed back against their presence on campus.

To those who believe this is a matter of free speech or that we should encourage a diversity of viewpoints on campus, we say that CPCs and abortion clinics are not simple stand-ins for pro-choice or pro-life positions. Abortion clinics are highly regulated and provide legitimate medical care. CPCs are unregulated and spread medical misinformation in their quest to prevent people from accessing medical care.

This year we handed out informational flyers at yet another Student Involvement Fair. We wonder where our right to "free speech" is. We were told that our demonstration must not be disruptive and must take place within a marked zone outside of the student involvement fair. And yet, the college will protect the CPCs' right to spread medical misinformation, lies and anti-abortion propaganda despite evidence of the risks to community public health that CPCs create.

There are many ways to get involved, and everyone is welcome. You do not need consider yourself pro-choice to be opposed to deceptive, manipulative strategies that can cause serious harm to people's health and wellbeing. You can still sign our petition and come to the art exhibit about CPCs that is viewable in the Axinn winter garden.

We hope you will join us in this fight for reproductive justice and holding Middlebury College accountable.

Warmly,

The Middlebury Branch of the NESCAC Coalition to Ban CPCs

For more info on CPCs: Go/CPCInfo

This is a Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies informed, student-led and faculty-supported coalition to demand that the college ban crisis pregnancy center (CPC) advertising and involvement on our campus. Activism to ban CPCs from campus has been ongoing for years. This iteration of activism is informed by the prior research, documentation and momentum of our movement. This op-ed was compiled by Elissa Asch '22.5 and Bella Cady '22.5.

Editor's Note: Access to JSTOR and other academic websites may vary based on subscriptions. If you have concerns regarding any information cited, please reach out for a more comprehensive bibliography.

TOM NEVINS/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Student holding a protest sign for the Student Involvement Fair demonstration.

A plea to the basic logic of line structure

Op-ed

***Katie Futterman** is a News Editor for The Campus and a member of the class of 2024.*
***Jonah Joseph** is a member of the class of 2024.*

Let me begin by putting this in terms you may better understand: Baaah, bahh, bahh. This is directed toward the sheep that graze in Ross dining hall; the sheep that meekly fall into a single line the length of China's Great Wall at 12:15 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. If you're saying to yourself right now, "bahh, bahh, bahh," (translation: obviously there is only one line in Ross), well think again. The two line solution has had massive success in other areas such as Proctor and Atwater. With two lines in Ross, we can massively improve the efficiency of personal serving in Ross. How many times have you sat in line for eons for some harlequin to decide whether he wants one or two pieces of chicken, while a bounty of authentic penne and fragrant Midd Marinara, the only thing you're hankering for, sits unscathed; just waiting, yearning, to be eaten by you.

If I may offer a hypothetical, imagine you're at a farmers market (I'm sure you've been to at least one if you go here) and there are two stands. The first one offers gourmet, vegan sausage, and right beside the second one sells handmade, artisan macaroni jewelry. If you came to the market with the sole purpose of purchasing macaroni jewelry but had no interest in the vegan sausage, would you weather the hour and a half vegan sausage line to get to the jewelry? By Jove! You would skip that sausage line faster than Ross runs out of garlic bread.

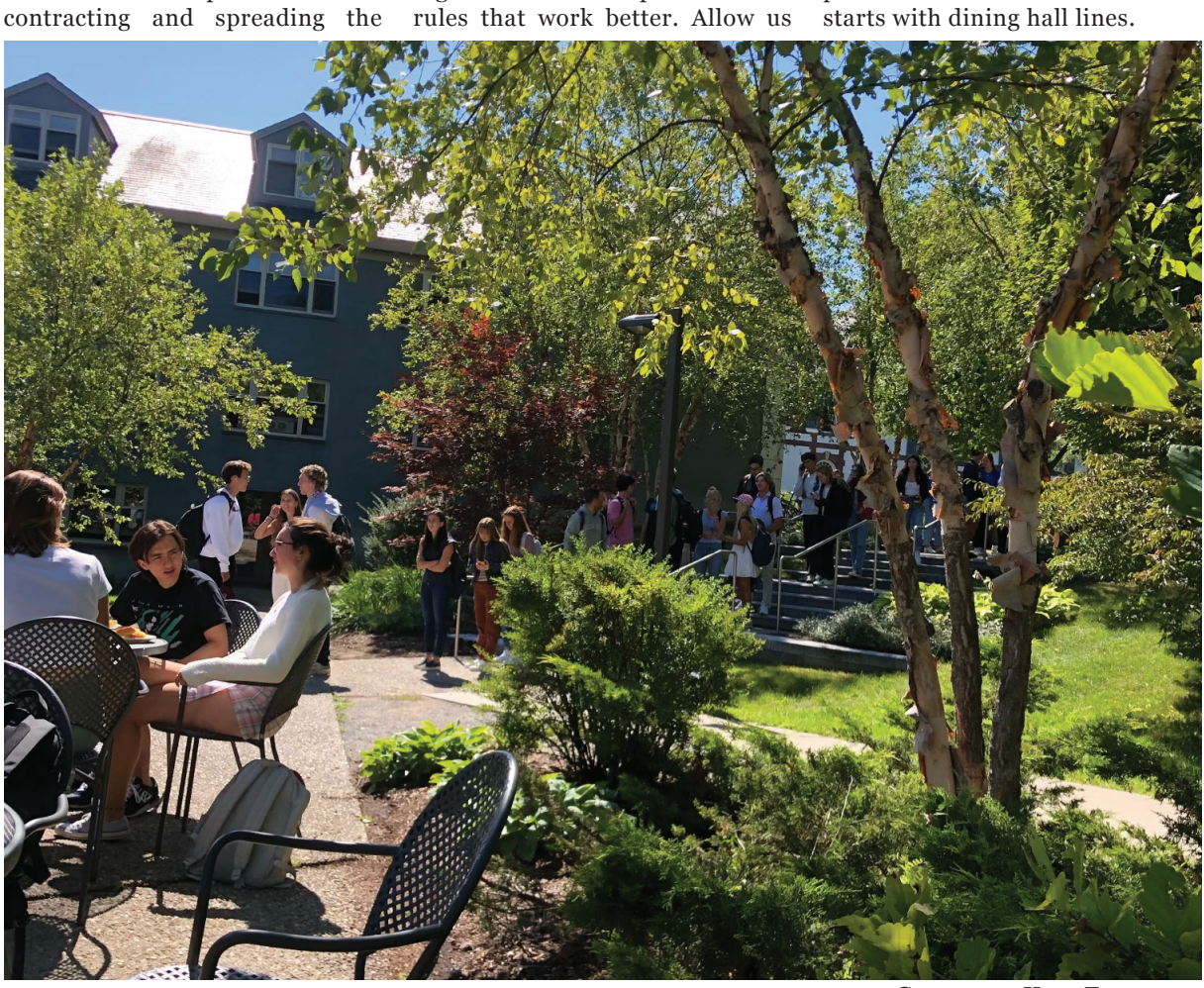
If only we could all see Ross for what it truly is: a market. A place of plenty, where there need not be an hour wait to get salad, or grab a baked good, or pick up a Jove-darn banana from the banana bowl for Jove's sake. Far too many are sucked into the game of waiting for food, having years shaved off of their lives in a mindless act, but for us few, us brave, who take what is rightfully ours when it is available, who seize the moment when it is ripe to retrieve mushroom risotto or gnocchi alongside that sweet nectar of the gods that is Midd Marinara.

So next time you find yourself getting ready to queue up along with the rest of the passive numbskulls who only want food from the second station, take some initiative. You walk right past that first line, straight to the unmanned broccoli calling your name. Be warned, a first line hooligan may try to harangue you by saying something like, "hey buddy, you need to wait in line like the rest of us!" Be ready to retort with a witticism such as, "the name's [insert name], not buddy. And by the way, I only want broccoli and some of that mouthwatering Midd Marinara that's begging to be put in my mouth."

But in order to really make change, our movement needs numbers. When one person "cuts" it looks bad. But it doesn't have to be this way. As a small, reasonably close-knit community, we have the power to re-write the rules. Allowing a system of free-flowing food (or fuel as the athletes call it) retrieval would make for a series of shorter lines. Picture making polite conversation in a line of three or four other students all seeking the same dish; instead of waiting in a line with hundreds, you'd be with a small group of people with similar taste. "Oh you also like sweet potatoes?" "I thought they were called yams." "Oh, you're right, they are called yams." *much shared laughter* "Do you want to eat yams together?" Boom. New best friends. All because of the free-for-all system which cultivates a community around similar tastes.

Evidence suggests that a free-for-all method would not cause the chaos that many fear. Would you shove someone aside for Black Pepper Tofu if you knew you were going to see them the next day in Decolonizing Class? Take a moment to recall the peak of The Great Covid-19 Pandemic, when students wore masks diligently in student-only spaces. Of course, this was due in part to fear of contracting and spreading the illness, but at times when our case count was averaging about zero for months on end, the fear of social repercussions undoubtedly played an enormous role. These same rules govern the dining hall. In fact, there is actually no one dictating the way we currently stand in line. Hypothetically, you can skip the entire thing, and there would be no one to reprimand you. And yet, most people do not skip the line. Instead, we come up with our own strange social rules, in which a group of five people can go to the front because someone from their first-year seminar who they occasionally wave at is up there.

We urge the community to work together to come up with social rules that work better. Allow us to invoke Middlebury College's mission to "prepare students to lead engaged, consequential, and creative lives, contribute to their communities, and address the world's most challenging problems." While this issue may be small, it is of utmost importance. There are so many things that we do not have the power to change at this moment (undoubtedly larger, more important issues), but in many ways, it is the small things that count. Making every meal faster will make every day more enjoyable at Middlebury. Moreover, working as a community to set new social rules will help us prepare to "address the world's most challenging problems" in the future. But it all starts with dining hall lines.



COURTESY OF KATIE FUTTERMAN

Students stand in long lines to enter a dining hall

BURLINGTON TAIKO BRINGS TRADITIONAL JAPANESE ART TO MIDDLEBURY

By GREGORY MARCINIK
Contributing Writer

As a guest of the Performing Arts Series of Middlebury College, Burlington Taiko visited Middlebury on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 to introduce the community to the ancient Japanese tradition of taiko. The rhythmic and deep resonance of the drums created a musical effect of powerful beats that listeners of all ages could feel. The performances, as well as the history of this ancient art, captivated the Middlebury community not only on the days of the performances but in the workshops leading up to them.

Founder and leader of the Burlington Taiko Group Stuart Paton recalled hearing taiko in Japan, where he lived between the ages of six and eighteen, in a phone interview with The Campus. His neighbor practiced the art of taiko on the weekends, giving Paton a subconscious foundation to begin learning it himself.

"I knew my neighbor, Mr. Ishii, as a kimono fabric dyer. He would change the color of kimono fabric for new brides, so I knew him as an artisan," Paton said. "And then one weekend he was playing Taiko in the park, and it was an exclamation-point-moment for me. He was way-cool already, but then he was taiko cool. And for a kindergartener going into first grade, this was mega awesome, especially for it being my first time hearing taiko and seeing it in person."

The deep resonating sounds of the drum remained significant in Paton's life through his move to the United States. In college, he heard a taiko performance again and was immediately drawn to learning it. He later studied taiko with Tanaka Sensei in San Francisco, who introduced taiko to the U.S. in the 1980s. Shortly after moving to Burlington, Vt., Paton started the Burlington Taiko Group. And since 1987, the group estimates that it has introduced half a million people to the art.

The Burlington Taiko group has traveled throughout the country, putting on performances for thousands of people. In fact, they have had over 200 corporate, public and collegiate performances, including performances at events such as the Boston Marathon and the Black Ships Festival in Newport, R.I.

"It was four hours of a serious river of running humans, and a percentage of them were responding to us noticeably. Some of them were stopping to take photos, some were dancing the jig, some were hopping and skipping because the taiko was making them so happy," Paton said of his performance at the 100th Anniversary of the Boston Marathon. "It was the hugest flow of athletes in gratitude that I had ever experienced. And one of our future members was also running the marathon. He said, 'I hear taiko, that can't be taiko,' and he recognized the piece of music we were playing... and he asked if he could play taiko for a couple of minutes and played on our 5-foot big drum — and he just stopped in the middle of the marathon... his eyeballs were like spotlights, he was so happy."

The deep resonance and frequencies of the drum reach deep inside people, creating an effect that Paton explained as feeling new, yet familiar. The word "taiko" itself means "large drum" in Japanese, and refers to any type of drum formed from a large barrel and cow hide. The taiko drum was originally developed in India and used in Buddhist religious ceremonies. The drum then spread with Buddhism, arriving in Japan around 500 A.D. From there, it became an integral part of Japanese culture, used in spiritual healing, prayer, military fighting and dispelling evil spirits. Starting in the 20th century, the taiko drum was used in musical performances. Certain groups such as Ondekoza and Kodo gained popularity in Japan for their coordination and masterful skill in taiko. Their practices of communal living and discipline gave them unparalleled skill that mesmerized audiences.

Burlington Taiko's performers train once a week for three hours to gain the coordination and skill necessary to achieve this effect. There is no improvisation in the performances; instead, the drummers memorize the entirety of their parts and solos.

Nadia Hare/The Middlebury Campus

The performances themselves are a mix of music and dance.

The performances themselves are a mix of music and dance. According to Paton, each movement is meant to be efficient and potent. The drummer moves in a way that is like watching a martial artist work out a form. Each drummer is challenged to constantly concentrate on their movement as well as the movement of others. As well as mentally focusing on every hit, the drummers must be physically fit enough to perform songs up to ten minutes long.

Julia Davenport, a member of the group, stated that studying the art of taiko helps with concentration. By hitting the drums, she releases power from her body, converting it into deep, resonating sounds. The group is also challenged to perform about fifteen songs, which requires team building and coordination.

"I felt so much music-joy and community-joy, and this is what I want... so many people, from four-year-olds to alumni and elder community members were all walking together, and it felt lovely, and there were so many smiles," Paton said, reflecting on Burlington Taiko's visit to Middlebury. "And people who took short workshops were participating and people who just jumped in and grabbed instruments were participating. And after a week of sharing and teaching taiko in the greater Middlebury community, it felt wonderful."

Editor's Note: Senior Arts & Culture Editor Eliza King Freedman '23 contributed to reporting.

REEL CRITIC: "Don't Worry Darling"

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

Where to begin. "Don't Worry Darling" is a big-budget, star-studded psychological thriller whose reputation preceded its release. I had high hopes for the film, but as the credits rolled, those hopes were replaced with questions.

"Don't Worry Darling" follows Alice (Florence Pugh) and Jack Chambers (Harry Styles), a young married couple living in an idyllic 1950s Southern California suburb. They are part of the Victory Project, a community overseen by its mysterious founder Frank (Chris Pine), in which the men work while the women stay home, spending time shopping, cooking and cleaning. For a while, Alice seems content with her life of ballet classes and poolside gossiping with Bunny (Olivia Wilde, who also directs). Chaos descends as she starts to investigate strange happenings and the secrecy surrounding the Victory Project.

Even before its release, "Don't Worry Darling" was making headlines due to behind-scenes-drama. Leaked videos revealed tensions with the initial casting of Shia LaBeouf as Jack, and there is speculation that the budding relationship between Wilde and Styles interfered with filming. Pugh's lack of press for the movie, especially at the Venice Film Festival, raised more questions about cast member dynamics. By the time the movie hit theaters, my curiosity had been sufficiently piqued.

I couldn't agree more with Wilde when she said, "Florence is a force." Pugh gives this film her all and is brilliant on screen. She is the effervescent housewife one minute and a mad woman the next. I appreciated the nods to "The Yellow Wallpaper" and how Alice's "hysteria" is constantly downplayed, and Pugh anchors the movie well. I particularly enjoyed her scenes with Wilde, which were filled with humor and tension. Styles plays Jack with handsome charm, but he was less effective during the more demanding scenes, and his angry face got some laughs from other moviegoers in the crowd.

The cinematography in this movie is stunning. Wilde spends a significant amount of the film capturing the essence of the location and time period, with montages of palm tree-lined streets, lots of cigarettes and endless coffee-pouring. The hair and costumes are immaculate. Some of the film's creepy visual motifs, like the black and white dancers and reflections in mirrors, create a very tense atmosphere. Additionally, the soundtrack really elevates the mood, and the repetition of the song "With You All the Time" is haunting.

I was looking forward to seeing how some of the more frightening scenes in the trailer, like the wall suffocating Alice and the saran wrap around her head, fit into the movie. But I was let down because these scenes didn't have much relevance to the plot. While they were interesting, spine-chilling ideas, they were disjointed.

I can't discuss "Don't Worry Darling" without mentioning the polarizing ending, so skip this paragraph if you don't want spoilers. While I enjoyed the chaotic, blood-stained "Black Mirror" twist, its execution fell flat. The premise here is fascinating (even if the storyline of men becoming radicalized online feels a little too real), but there was not enough time spent exploring the logistics of the program and simulation. I wish there were fewer bacon-and-egg montages, and more details about the program's creation or even some of Frank's backstory. If anything, the ending left me with more questions than answers about the movie's mystery. Instead, I'm turning to Tik Tok for elaborate theories, backstories and interpretations.

Courtesy Photo

"Don't Worry Darling" was released on Sept. 23, 2022.

Furthermore, I think the themes of "Don't Worry Darling" aren't as groundbreaking as the film believes they are. It's very obvious throughout the beginning of the movie that there is a mystery surrounding the Victory Project, and Alice is getting suspicious, but the final product doesn't follow through with the explanation. It gets too muddled in the details of the set-up and doesn't give that same attention to the conclusion. Ultimately, the result feels weak and the ending comes off as a cop-out.

TLDR: Do I think "Don't Worry Darling" deserves a 39% from critics on Rotten Tomatoes? No, I would give it a solid 65%. Watch "Don't Worry Darling" for Pugh's performance and its tense and stylish atmosphere, but don't expect anything trailblazing.

"VISUALIZING REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE" CRITIQUES CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTERS THROUGH ART

By OLIVIA PINTAIR
Contributing Writer

On Tuesday, Sept. 27, student members of the college's first Public Feminism Fellowship opened an art exhibition called "Visualizing Reproductive Justice: A Call to End Fake Clinics" in the college's Axinn Center. The exhibit follows in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision this June in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization to overturn the constitutional right to abortion upheld by Roe v. Wade for over half a century. In the aftermath of this decision, which ensured that access to abortion will become illegal or severely restricted in at least 26 states, the fellows were among millions across the country grappling with how to resist.

The Public Feminism Fellowship, funded by the Gender, Sexuality, & Feminist Studies Department and the Feminist Resource Center at Chellis House, was developed and facilitated by Carly Thomsen, assistant professor of Gender, Sexuality, & Feminist Studies, as an effort to translate feminist pedagogy beyond the classroom.

"I've been trying to figure out what resistance looks like in this moment when litigation and policy are becoming increasingly impossible in terms of finding ways to create a more socially just world," Thomsen said. "I think one way to do that is through inviting people into conversation through art."

This summer, as much of the nation grieved the roll-back of Roe v. Wade, Kamari Williams '22.5, Isabel Pérez Martín '25, Alexis Welch '22.5, Elissa Asch '22.5, Luci Bryson '25, Emily Ribeiro '24 and M. Farley '24.5 gathered alongside Thomsen each week to study feminist and queer theoretical texts on abortion, reproductive justice and crisis pregnancy centers, developing knowledge to ultimately transform into something tangible. "The result of our work" reads the fellows' collective artist statement, "is this exhibit — a translation of the theoretical into the material, an invitation into our conversations."

"I think that art lowers the bar of entry into academic spaces, or in discourse about complex topics," Williams wrote to The Campus. "I believe that information should reach the audiences that it's designed to "protect" or center because if not, what's the use?"

While the art pieces in the exhibit range in medium, style and focus, nearly all of them criticize crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs). According to a collective artist statement, CPCs are religiously-motivated non-profit organizations that pose as medical clinics in order to spread misinformation and serve an anti-abortion agenda, constituting a lesser-known but particularly insidious part of the U.S. abortion story.

"CPCs rely on and exploit the general lack of medical knowledge in circulation about reproductive health," Ribeiro said.

Many of the pieces explore the dangers of CPCs directly, like Asch's sculpture "Fenced In," which considers geofencing, a tactic through which abortion opponents use location data to profile and target individuals with ads promoting CPCs and adoption agencies.

"There are words on every segment of the fence displaying a different lie that crisis pregnancy centers tell to the people who walk through their doors," Asch said.

"Women bleed out during abortions," one panel reads.

"People think about [abortion] as dangerous, traumatizing, difficult and painful. But that's all a narrative that's been created. In fact, childbirth is 14 times more dangerous than getting an abortion," Asch said, citing a 2012 study.

For many fellows, creating art was a means through which to process personal relationships to reproductive justice.

"CPCs manipulate Christian doctrine to empower violating practices," wrote Farley, who grew up in an anti-abortion Catholic community, in a text to The Campus. "I wanted my art to offer a rebuttal to this practice...in pursuit of a higher ethical stance."

"When I was reading about crisis pregnancy centers, I felt very alienated and felt like my body was not mine." Welch said, discussing her piece, "To Be Seen As A Woman."

Tom Nevins/The Middlebury Campus
"Visualizing Reproductive Justice" is located in the Axinn winter garden.

Two weeks ago, a student-led demonstration, co-organized by Asch and Bella Cady '22.5, protested a local CPC, The Women's Center, which has been permitted a table at the Student Involvement Fair for several years. This summer, Asch founded the NESCAC Coalition to Ban CPCs from campuses, garnering support from students at every NESCAC school and participation in organizing from eight of the eleven so far.

"Now more than ever it feels relevant because people are really struggling mentally with what's happening," Bryson said.

"The biggest challenge [of the fellowship] was coming to the harsh realization of the practices [CPCs] establish and the repercussions they could have on people," Pérez Martín said.

"In terms of polarizing topics, abortion is considered to be at the top of the list," Thomsen said. "But I think that's a really limiting way of understanding abortion. Within that framework, [CPCs] become synonymous with the pro-life position. But even people who don't believe in abortion can and should be opposed to [CPCs] because of the deceptive strategies that they use. Sometimes the framing of issues is precisely what limits our ability to address them effectively."

"There's a concept in protest art that's frequently used where you visualize the future that you want to see through your artwork," Welch said, discussing her photograph "When He Gives You Lemons," a self-portrait taken outside a megachurch in Springfield, Ill. that imagines a reality in which CPCs are regulated.

In a sense, it seems like this is what the entire exhibit is doing — dreaming up a world where reproductive justice is the center of attention, something no one can look away from.

"You can't really hide from these works of art," Welch said. "Hopefully that can help other people step into action."

"SAME BUT DIFFERENT" EXPLORES CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION THROUGH DANCE

By SOPHIA AFSAR-KESHMIRI
Contributing Writer

Middlebury College Dance Department Professors Lida Winfield and Christal Brown performed their first in-person performance of "Same But Different" on Friday, Sept. 23. They performed as part of this year's Clifford Symposium, which focused on conflict transformation.

The piece received its name from their shared and divergent identities. They share many personality traits and experiences, but Brown is Black, and Winfield is white. It "highlights our [Winfield's and Brown's] similarities, but because of what we look like, the world may never connect the dots," Brown said in the performance program.

Having created the piece during the pandemic, Brown and Winfield choreographed and developed the dance in Brown's garage. Given pandemic restrictions, there was no live audience for their original performance — it was only available via a recording.

The piece was a mix of contemplation and statement about the performers' similarities and differences, their worlds, love for them and love for each other. They presented these contemplations and emotions through a combination of movement and narrative storytelling. As the two showed the audience their story through the same choreography — but with each of their own styles infused — they orally told their own and each other's stories as well.

The two narrated their schooling, dance training and relationships, finding — as the name of their piece might suggest — similarities and differences. Most memorably, both grew up in a wheelchair accessible home, which had lower countertops and other forms of accessible infrastructure. They elaborated, saying that this made them see the world differently and has had a lasting impact on their adult lives. Brown noted a past home construction project and how her request for lower than standard counter-tops made the contractor tilt his head.

While they narrated these tales, the way each felt about what they were saying was articulated from their movements; if they felt happy, their movements were energetic and gleeful, if they were angry, their movements were powerful and sharp and if they were sad, their movements were slow and limp.

The two approached their differences with compassion and actively listened to one another while performing. It was a constant cycle of listening and responding, which the two portrayed in their choreography and lighting. As one told their story, the other would stand in a less central position and in a shadow. Brown and Winfield showed active listening by dancing to the story of the other performer in the background, but not talking. The movement associated with listening in the piece seemed to communicate to the audience that each was truly absorbing and contemplating what the other was saying.

At times, they performed the same choreography but usually with an individualistic spin. Winfield's movements were high energy and very enthusiastic. She made small, very detailed movements. Brown also performed with high energy, but her dance style was characterized by large sweeping movements.

Courtesy Photo
Professors Lida Winfield and Christal Brown performed "Same But Different" on Sept. 23.

The most notable aspect of the performance was the loving energy that Winfield and Brown were able to create in the theater. Their movements visualized the emotions they were feeling, and with each step, leap or spin, that emotion was expelled into the surrounding space.

"The world is big, and there's a place in the world for everybody," Winfield said during the performance.

Following the performance they held a Q&A with dramaturg and Assistant Professor of Theatre Michole Biancosino. Questions ranged from how they came up with the choreography to how they created the narrative script. One of the most thoughtful questions asked how audience members can apply the performance to their everyday lives and promote the theme of this year's Clifford Symposium.

Brown elected to answer the question, saying that the way to continue to interact with "Same But Different" in everyday life was to work on being active listeners.

"We're good at being quiet, but not listening," Brown said.

MIDDLEBURY STUDENTS SEEK SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH FASHION

By EL FAHEY
Contributing Writer

Fashion culture emphasizes individuality: Clothing is a form of innovation, meaning and personal expression. And with that, many Middlebury students have used their clothing to express their ideals about sustainability and environmental justice.

Patagonia is an extremely popular clothing brand here at Middlebury. The founder Yvon Chouinard recently gave away the company to a trust fighting climate change. Their outdoor apparel balances comfort and style, making it a popular choice among Middlebury's hikers and campers.

Anna Doucet '26 is an avid Patagonia fan and believes in the importance of self-expression through fashion.

"I do think that continuing to shop from the brand and supporting the nonprofit is important and demonstrates that one cares about where they are shopping from and acknowledges how important supporting sustainable clothing brands is," Doucet said.

Thrifting and shopping second-hand is also on the rise. Y2K and '90s fashion are trending, and many garments from those eras can be found in local thrift stores. Shops like Buy Again Alley and Neat Repeats Resale Shop are popular local thrift stores for buying statement pieces to create funky outfits or finding timeless staples.

Charlotte Cebula '25 loves numerous clothing trends but also considers the impact of making new purchases, aiming to shop sustainably.

"I care about style and tend to change wardrobes often, so in order to do that with minimal impact on the environment, I prefer to thrift my clothes," Cebula said.

If not thrifting, shopping local and for sustainable brands is an alternative some students use to cut down on their carbon footprint. One of the many supporters on campus of shopping locally is Joshua Wayland '25.

"I believe it is extremely important to uplift small businesses to help our communities thrive and give less money to big brands," Wayland said.

Some Middlebury students create and sell their own clothing through Etsy or their own personal social media sites, often upcycling existing clothes. Eden Horton '26 is one of the many small business owners living right on campus. She specializes in embroidered clothing, specifically sweatshirts and bags.

"Embroidery is a super fun way for me to spice up pieces I already have and make them fully unique. My most popular item is my floral lettered sweatshirt. I don't know how to sew quite yet, but in the future, I hope to learn so I can add my embroidered elements to them," Horton said.

Recently, the college store even made an effort to let people shop sustainably on campus. On Sept. 23, Middlebury hosted a vintage clothing and record pop-up shop outside Proctor Dining Hall. With a wide selection of chunky sweaters for the colder weather, graphic tees for a casual day of classes and a variety of dresses and skirts for weekend partying, there was something for everyone.

Maya Alexander '26 was one of the many customers at the pop-up where she found a pink knit sweater and a white slip dress.

"It's definitely not always the most convenient or affordable option, but I try to limit ordering clothing online if it's something I don't necessarily need," Alexander said. "And aside from environmental motivations, I love knowing that I am curating a closet specific to me."

NICHE READS: NOVEL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJORS

By SYLVIE SHURE
Contributing Writer

If you struggle to find time for fun reading, this is the spot for you! Niche Reads recommends novels that relate to academic (or other) interests so that you can explore a new book while still feeling productive. Check each week back for more cool books!

If there's one thing that's true about Middlebury students, it's that they're busy. They've got work to do, meetings to attend and social lives to maintain. With all of these external responsibilities, reading for pleasure is often the first hobby to go. How can you justify starting a fun and interesting novel when you already have to read 300 pages of sociolinguistic historical analysis of the philosophy of chemistry?

What if, to help get over that hump, you had a convenient list of books to choose from that aligned with your academic interests? What if you could read a book that was both personally fulfilling and intellectually productive?

Well, you're in luck! Niche Reads will be recommending books to fit your interests, starting with novels that relate to political science. Here you'll find three carefully selected books that explore the relationship between personal identity and political upheaval.

"Where You Come From"

By Saša Stanišić

This novel explores in heart-wrenching detail what it means to be from a country that no longer exists. If you're looking for a more traditional narrative, you might be happier with the other two recommendations, but if you're in the mood for something less conventional, "Where You Come From" is worth the ride.

Against the backdrop of a war-ravaged, formerly Yugoslavian village of 13 people, this structurally innovative work of auto-fiction examines the fallout of both war and immigration. It twists chronology and takes risks in its structure to craft a unique and compelling story, dealing with national and personal identity.

Stanišić recounts his own life and family history for the benefit of these rich explorations with honesty, care and humor. At once personal and universal, "Where You Come From" seeks to answer the titular question, which may not be as philosophical as we'd like to assume.

You should read this book if you like experimental story structures, if you're interested in family dynamics or if you're looking for an introspective read.

"Beasts of a Little Land"

By Juhea Kim

"Beasts of a Little Land" follows many characters, but its main focus is Jade, a young courtesan in Japanese-occupied Korea. Through a sweeping, decades-long account of Jade's life, the novel explores how people can live with war and brutality, and the importance of a national identity.

Detailing the process of ideological radicalization, for better or for worse, the novel showcases the personal consequences of taking bold political action.

While impressive overall, "Beasts of a Little Land" really shines on a macro level. Kim masterfully interweaves seemingly disparate plot elements to create a startlingly beautiful and cohesive story.

You should read this book if you like epic, intricate stories, if you are interested in historical fiction or if you're not afraid of moral complexity.

"A Fine Balance"

By Rohinton Mistry

Amidst religious persecution and political turmoil, four strangers in an unnamed city in 1970s India come together to create a safe haven and a makeshift family in a small apartment.

Brimming with compassion and urgency, "A Fine Balance" is an impressive literary feat, from its ambitious scope to its vivid setting and beautiful prose. Far and away, though, the standout element of this novel is the depth of its characters. The four main characters — Dina, Ishvar, Om and Maneck — relate to each other with remarkable humanity and complexity.

While beautiful, "A Fine Balance" is extremely sad and often disturbing. Don't read it unless you're prepared for a difficult read.

You should read this book if you like the found-family trope, if you gravitate toward character-driven stories or if you're ready to cry.

PFL Weekly

By COLE SEIFER, DAN URCHUR, BEN WAGNER & SAM MCGARRAHAN
Podcast Hosts

The PFL Weekly hosts chat with Victoria Fawcett '26, a first-year runner on the Panthers' cross country team. On Oct. 1, Fawcett followed up two recent second place finishes with a top-20 performance at the Mike Woods Invitational. Men's soccer goalkeeper Ryan Grady '24 ties the Middlebury second-place record with 24 shutouts as the team snags a win at ninth-ranked Wesleyan. After a 9–0 victory over St. John Fisher in their home opener on a fresh turf field, the field hockey team's win streak reaches a staggering 39-straight games. Panther football starts the season 3–0. Women's golf placed fifth at home for the George Phinney Classic, while men's golf faced Division I competition at the Adirondack Invitational at the Lake Placid Golf Club. The hosts preview an exciting upcoming fall Family Weekend, chock full of home games. Tune in for updates on all things Middlebury Athletics.

Caroline Harding

Alec Gironda '24 leads the pack for Panthers XC

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Sports Editor

More than halfway through the regular season, it is hard to imagine anyone catching Alec Gironda '24 as he chases yet another individual win for the Middlebury men's cross country team.

Gironda has seldom taken his foot off the gas this season, taking home two wins in both the Aldrich Invitational home competition (6k: 19:57.1) and at the Vermont Technical College (VTC) Maple Syrup Challenge (8k: 27:05.50). Coming off of two fresh victories, he put down a personal best time in the Mike Woods invitational at SUNY Geneseo on Saturday, crossing the finish line with a time of 24:56.3 (8k): a personal record by 35 seconds that landed him in fifth place.

In a sport based on pure tenacity and stamina, finding motivation in the most painful moments is a critical component of crossing the finish line with a win. On his strong start to this season, Gironda cited the competitive nature of the team as a key driver in their pursuit of a title. In such a unique environment, Gironda's ability to perform on race day is undoubtedly enhanced by the support he feels from his teammates.

Whether it be on race day or in the midst of a hard workout, he reflected on the grit and passion he and his teammates bring."When it's mile four, and you're hurting real bad out there, you're really doing it for one another," Gironda said. "You make it hurt for one another."

Teammate Owen Johnson '26 commented on what it has been like to compete alongside Gironda this year, noting his energy and dedication to every workout. "He is a talented and dedicated runner," Johnson said. "Just watching his workouts you can see the improvements week to week."

Courtesy of John Kenny

Alec Gironda '24 celebrates his win at the Aldrich Invitational.

Humble when speaking of his accomplishments, Gironda was also quick to praise this year's captains, Zander Kessler '22.5 and Luke Lorenz '23, as key role models in his college athletic experience. "They set such a good example for the team when it comes to hard work, optimism and having fun," Gironda said.

That hard work is paying off. With several Panthers on the leaderboard every week, Middlebury cross country is off to a strong start and is hungry for a record-breaking season. The current program-best was set in 2013 with a seventh place NCAA finish; alongside a strong group of returners from a strong season last year and coming off of a dedicated summer of preparation (and a lot of mileage), Gironda wholeheartedly believes this team is on track to shatter the previous record. With Gironda leading the pack, all eyes are on Middlebury men's cross country in their push to break records this season.

The men's cross country team races next at the Connecticut College Invitational on Saturday, Oct. 15.

TAUBER AND WOOD KEY TO FOOTBALL'S EARLY SUCCESS

By RYAN HEINZERLING
Staff Writer

Middlebury Football cruised to victory in their exciting home opener on Sept.24. The team looked confident and driven in a cohesive win over the Wesleyan Cardinals (2–1) on Youngman Field.

According to Leo Urena '24, that has a lot to do with off-field cohesion and newfound trust.

"Our team is a lot closer this year," Urena said. "With basically all the guys returning, we were able to make a tight knit group that holds each other accountable."

The Panthers helped each other out on both sides of the ball last Saturday. The game began tight, with no score and an interception by Dave Filias '25 in the first quarter. Only two minutes into the second quarter, quarterback Ben Tauber '22.5 connected with receiver Donovan Wood '24 for a 5-yard touchdown pass to finish a 46-yard drive that gave Middlebury the lead.

Middlebury's defensive line forced a punt that began the march down the field. Not long after, the Panthers pushed the score to 14–0 with a 52-yard drive punctuated by another passing touchdown from Tauber.

Wesleyan scored on a passing touchdown at the end of the quarter, thanks to a 92-yard drive led by quarterback Logan Tomlinson to make it 14–7.

After a third quarter fumble by Tauber gave Wesleyan better field position, the Cardinals kicked a field goal to inch closer to the Panthers and make the score 14–10,but Middlebury responded quickly.

Tauber and Wood came through again in the fourth quarter to complete an 11-yard touchdown that finished an 80-yard drive. Leo Urena '24 attributes the passing success so far this year to dedication on the practice field.

That synergy showed on the field, as Tauber finished the day with three touchdowns and 271 passing yards, and Wood finished with 130 receiving yards and two touchdowns.

Urena also highlighted senior Greg Livingston '22.5 for leading the team and keeping everyone driven towards winning. As they focus on building better team culture this season, the team has also brought in mental health group Hilinski's Health to promote positivity on the bench.

Courtesy of Kevin Wood

Donovan Wood '24 catches a touchdown pass in Middlebury's win over Wesleyan.

The Panthers improved to 3–0 after this weekend's win over Bowdoin, and they look to continue their early success over family weekend, as they host Williams on Saturday, Oct. 8.